

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
10 March 2005 (10.03.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/021129 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **B01D 21/01,**
C02F 1/54, 1/56

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/AU2004/001158

(22) International Filing Date: 27 August 2004 (27.08.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
2003904751 29 August 2003 (29.08.2003) AU
2004901610 25 March 2004 (25.03.2004) AU

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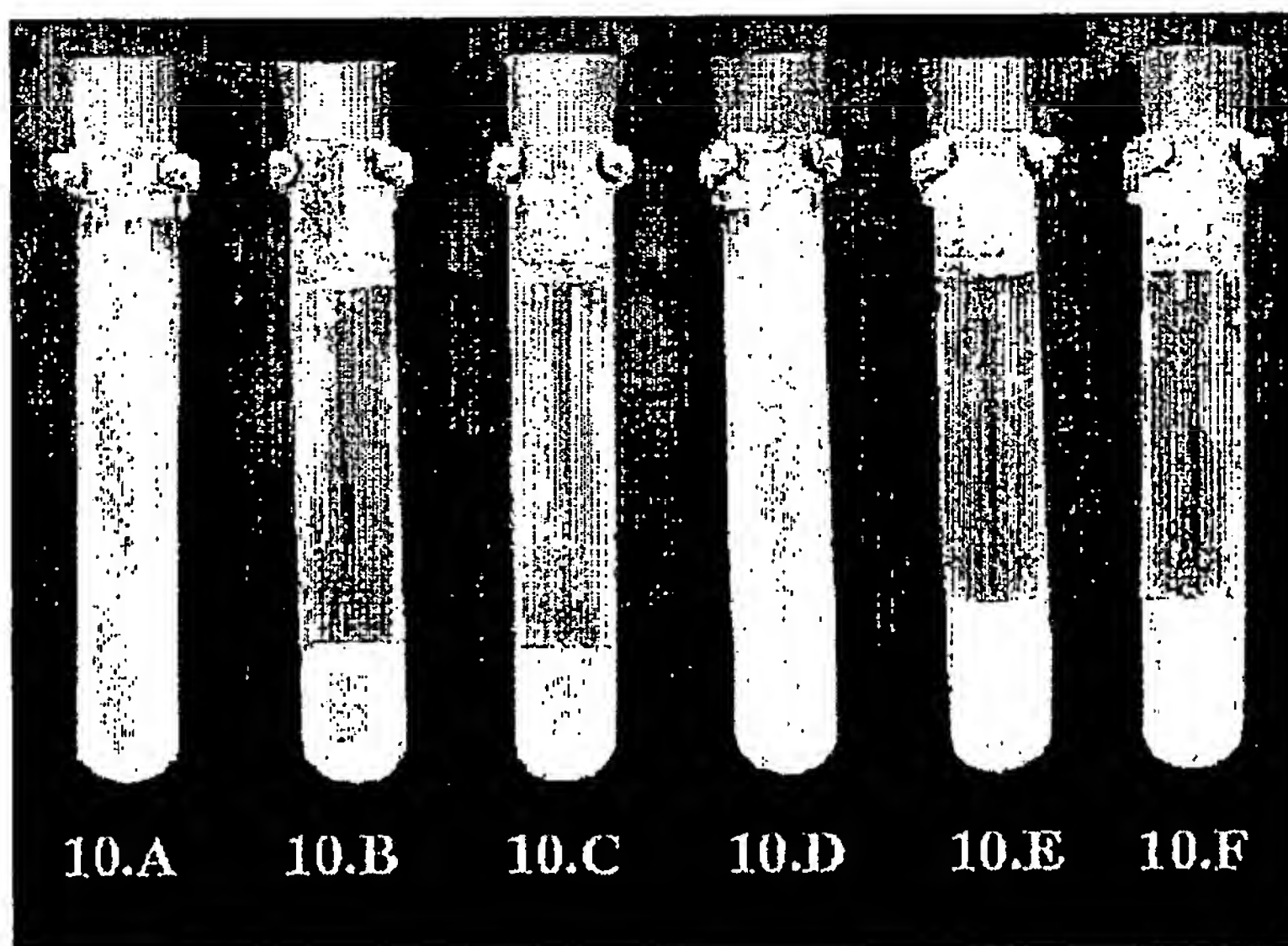
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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: STIMULANT SENSITIVE FLOCCULATION AND CONSOLIDATION



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to methods for the separation of materials from heterogeneous fluids and provides a means of effecting stimulant-sensitive flocculation and consolidation of solid suspensions within a liquid medium. Specifically, the present invention provides a method of controlling the state of a suspension of solid particles in a liquid, including applying to the suspension a stimulus adapted to control inter-particle forces between the solid particles. The stimulus is reversibly operable to control attraction and/or repulsion. Means of consolidating a sediment bed and of separating the resultant liquids-rich and solids-rich phases are also within the ambit of the invention.

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GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— *with international search report*

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